

**Remarks Prior to Discussions With  
Chairman Yasser Arafat of the  
Palestinian Authority and an  
Exchange With Reporters**  
*September 23, 1999*

***Middle East Peace Process***

**The President.** Let me say, I am delighted to see Chairman Arafat again. We have a lot to discuss, obviously, about our bilateral relations, and especially about the permanent status talks. He and Prime Minister Barak have agreed on a very ambitious timetable, to have a framework agreement by February, final agreement by next September. The United States is prepared to do all we can to assist them in coming to an agreement.

And I would like to take this opportunity to say that we should first meet our own obligations under the Wye agreement. And I hope the Congress will give me the funding both for Israel and for the Palestinian Authority, so that we can meet our obligations there. And we're working hard. We're into the final budget legs now, and I'm quite hopeful.

***Permanent Status Talks***

**Q.** Mr. President, what did Chairman Arafat ask you vis-a-vis the permanent status talks? Did he ask you for a more active role, more involvement, sir?

**The President.** We're just starting—we're getting off to a late start, so we're just starting our conversation. But you know, I've been active in this all along, for 6½ years, now. I intend to continue to be active, to do whatever I can to help the parties come to an agreement. If they're willing—and they must be willing, or they would not have agreed to such an ambitious timetable—then I'll do what I can.

***Israel-Syria Negotiations***

**Q.** [Inaudible]—about the Palestinian-Israeli track? Prime Minister Barak said just yesterday, any time, any place, for the Syrians to resume negotiations. There has yet to be any positive response there. What's your sense of what the hangup is there, and what can you do to try to move that along?

**The President.** Well, we're working on it, and I actually am quite hopeful.

***President's Involvement in the Peace Process***

**Q.** Mr. President, is there a chance that you'll visit the area, to give it a push on both tracks?

**The President.** I would do anything that would be helpful to facilitate the agreement. Right now, I'm not sure that would be the most helpful thing. I would do anything I could to facilitate the agreement.

***Palestinian State***

**Q.** The question of the state of Palestine, Mr. President, are you willing to spend more capital and secure your legacy as the President of the United States who achieved the Palestinian state and the peaceful settlement of the Middle East?

**The President.** Well, I'm certainly willing to do anything I can to achieve a peaceful settlement in the Middle East. The question of the state, as you know—that was a very well-worded question. Congratulations. [Laughter] But the question of the state is one to be resolved in the permanent status talks that have just begun, so I think they will resolve it. I think, obviously, that the two sides will make an agreement on that, or there won't be an agreement.

**Press Secretary Joe Lockhart.** Thank you, pool.

**Q.** Mr. President, what can you tell us—

**Q.** Mr. President, in your U.N. speech—

***Israel's Role in the Peace Process***

**Q.** [Inaudible]—what can you tell us about the performance of the Israeli side so far in the last one month?

**The President.** I'm encouraged. I think you should all be encouraged by the work that they've done together.

**Press Secretary Lockhart.** Thank you, everyone.

**The President.** Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Statement on Education  
Appropriations Legislation**  
*September 23, 1999*

The House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations subcommittee today passed a partisan bill that would seriously undermine our efforts to strengthen public education, protect workers, and move people from welfare to work.

This bill is proof that America's highest priority—improving our schools—remains the Republican Congress' lowest priority. The bill eliminates our effort to hire quality teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. It denies hundreds of thousands of young people access to after-school programs, fails to improve and expand Head Start, cuts the successful America Reads program, cuts educational technology, and eliminates the GEAR UP program, which helps young people prepare early for success in college. It fails to give public schools the resources to succeed, and does nothing to demand accountability for results.

The bill also terminates the successful School-To-Work program and Youth Opportunity Grants, and makes deep cuts in programs that help dislocated workers, provide worker protections, and ensure worker safety. It undermines America's efforts to move people from welfare to work by reneging on our bipartisan commitment to the States on welfare reform. It contains a range of unacceptable provisions, which would prevent the government from effectively protecting the health and safety of the American people.

The subcommittee bill would also underfund public health priorities, including preventive health, mental health and substance abuse, health care access for the poor, and our efforts to reduce racial health disparities and the spread of AIDS worldwide. It would prevent us from continuing to provide important patient protections for American workers and improving our Nation's organ distribution system. It also would threaten our ability to manage key entitlement programs, such as Medicare and Medicaid.

I warned earlier today that the tax bill sent to me as part of the Republican budget plan would lead to major reductions in key na-

tional investments in education and other programs. The subcommittee's bill today is another step in the same misguided direction.

This bill is unacceptable. Our Nation's children deserve much better. I sent the Congress a budget for the programs covered by this bill that provided for essential investments in America's needs and was fully provided for. If this bill were to come to me in its current form, I would veto it. Instead, I urge the House not to pass the subcommittee's bill and to work on a bipartisan basis with my administration on acceptable legislation.

**Message to the Congress  
Transmitting the National Money  
Laundering Strategy for 1999**

*September 23, 1999*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by the provisions of section 2(a) of Public Law 105-310 (18 U.S.C. 5341(a)(2)), I transmit herewith the National Money Laundering Strategy for 1999.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
September 23, 1999.

**Message to the Congress  
Transmitting a Report on the  
National Emergency With  
Respect to Iran**

*September 23, 1999*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with